



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:  
[www.consumer.org.my](http://www.consumer.org.my)

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109  
email: [consumerofpenang@gmail.com](mailto:consumerofpenang@gmail.com)

## Press Statement

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### **TSCA should be comprehensive and ban recreational inhalation devices as well**

Health Minister, Khairy Jamaluddin, announced that the Health Ministry (MoH) is planning to enact a new legislation – the Tobacco and Smoking Control Act (TSCA) – in parliament in 2022.

It would be good if the government can eradicate smoking but the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) would like to caution MoH about the tobacco industry which may instead promote alternative ways to nicotine addiction then lobby the idea to the government.

We welcome the long-awaited TSCA because the smoking habit is the cause of many non-communicable diseases such as cancers, ischaemic heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Such chronic and debilitating diseases is expensive to treat, costing the government multibillion ringgits annually. In 2018, it was estimated that the government was expected to spend RM7.4 billion in treatment costs for major illnesses caused by smoking.

It does not make sense for any government to sustain an industry that destroys the health of its people and imposes massive health costs by getting the population addicted to nicotine. Thus, the proposed TSCA is the way forward on the condition that the Act also encompasses all nicotine-based and non-nicotine-based products (inclusive heated tobacco product (HTP) and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)).

MoH should consider classifying HTP and ENDS as recreational inhalation devices so that the Act can anticipate future innovations by the industry.

The reason for banning non-nicotine-based products is because there is not a single good reason why a person should inhale chemicals into his lungs and these products are the gateway to experimentation and addiction to nicotine-based ones later. The ban should also be extended to include any recreational inhaling devices as they may lead to inhalant abuse and/or nicotine addiction.

In recent months there has been an increase in HTP and ENDS retail outlets because the industry had successfully lobbied the government in 2021, enticing the government with a possible gain of RM300 million from tax revenue.

It would be futile for the government to ban cigarettes but allow the sale of HTP and ENDS because nicotine addiction – the underlying problem – is not eliminated. We urge MoH to address the ban comprehensively in the proposed Act.

**Mohideen Abdul Kader**  
**President**  
**Consumers Association of Penang (CAP)**